

Finally, I want to thank each Member of this body for their friendship. I say to them, I hope that God will give them many blessings.

Before closing, let me add another thing: It has been my opinion, Mr. Speaker, that we have here an awesome responsibility to protect our democracy and to defend our Constitution. Too often in today's debate on social economic policies, in this House of Representatives, I believe we have forgotten that we have the right to uphold these two important concepts of our Nation. It seems to me that during these nearly 24 years we have been in turmoil in this country on more than one occasion, but each time democracy has stood firm.

That is why I am saddened that as I prepare to leave here, I see our country not the wonderful liberal, loving country to all of us that we were when I first came in 1973, but instead I see a resurgence of racism, of hatred, of meanness, of mean-spiritedness, and that leaves me extremely saddened.

We know this is true because we hear it on talk radio. We see it in the burning of African-American and other churches. We hear it in remarks that are unkind and unwise. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I still believe in America because after having served here all of this time, I absolutely believe with all certainty that America can correct her failings if there is a public will to do so.

So now as I leave here moments from now, I place my belief in my fellow Americans and in the Members who will come to this body in the 105th Congress. I believe that they will in fact see to it that America lives up to the words of Thomas Wolfe who said:

To every person his or her chance, to every person regardless of birth their shining opportunity, to every person, the right to live, to work, to be themselves, to become whatever their ambitions and decisions combine to make them. That is the promise of America.

That is the promise I hope of the 105th Congress.

I thank you all. I say farewell and Godspeed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Hampshire [Mr. ZELIFF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. ZELIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### THE 104TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to certainly add my congratulations to two of my colleagues who just spoke on the floor of the House, the Honorable CLEO FIELDS of Louisiana and certainly applaud his

work and encourage his return. And then to certainly my friend and colleague, the Honorable CARLISS COLLINS, with a major place in history, I thank her for her leadership and caring for all of us.

I do believe that it is appropriate, on this last day, as I have acknowledged my colleagues and might I add also a tribute to the departing Members of the Texas delegation. So many of them have served so ably, and I thank them for their service.

This last day we had an opportunity to come together in a bipartisan manner to present to the American people an omnibus appropriations bill that would keep the Government open. As I listened to the Speaker of the House suggest that this was automatic or that this had to be the way it was and it was going to happen, I have to reflect that there was a long journey that brought us to this day. For as we started the 104th Congress, I am unhappy or sad to say that that was not the spirit in which we opened this session, for we spent an acrimonious first year of the 104th, with three times of shutting down the Government, with large attacks on Medicare and Medicaid, with proposed tax cuts of \$245 billion that would have gutted the Medicare program and given tax cuts to those who did not need it, with a fight over balancing the budget and establishing priorities, when many of us recognized that you could balance the budget but you could preserve education and the environment and you could maintain the quality of life for our senior citizens.

In fact, we spent an acrimonious time arguing over which direction this country should go.

I am very proud that the Democrats maintained a steady and evenhanded approach, which is to say that Medicare can be preserved, it need not wither on the vine, that Medicaid that provide health care for the indigent but, more particularly, for our seniors in nursing homes certainly had to be preserved, but we could also balance the budget.

This bill is not a perfect bill. There are many things that a lot of us disagree with. But I believe we have come full circle from a time when we were slashing education, cutting school lunches and school breakfasts.

Might I add, I read an article this past week that said, though our children still remain at risk, many children are better off because of the existence of school lunch programs, for some of these programs are the only good and decent nutritious meal that our children get. With all of this attention now to our children, with the understanding that they are no more stronger than what we make them, I am glad to see, albeit it was a tough time, that there has been some recognition by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that reason and moderation are the best approach.

So I am very gratified that we can say that this omnibus bill includes \$3.5

billion added to our education budget. Not a frivolous investment, I might add, some \$381 million of it belongs to Head Start, and documentation shows us that if you begin a child on an early sure footing of learning, you can be sure that that is a child that grows to love learning and is on the road to success; \$491 million dollars for Goals 2000, already a program attested to by Members by both sides of the aisle, a program started by President George Bush, and \$200 million for the school to work program documented in my own city of Houston, where young people leave high school prepared to be gainfully employed. Then I have already said in many of my town hall meetings and I have seen the faces of individuals agreeing with me, it is better to give out a Pell grant than to build a jail cell. And so we have increased Pell grants for our college students and direct student loans across the Nation.

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Welfare reform got a lot of publicity, and many people were rising to the floor of the House and beginning to pound their fists and talk about those who were draining on America.

Well, if you tell people to pull up their bootstraps, many of them without shoes, it is going to be very hard to transition people from welfare to work without training and vocational training, and so it is important that in this legislation, unlike last year when the government was shut down, we have \$1.5 billion for vocational training and adult education.

That makes sense, but we had to work hard to get to that point, for the stridency of last year was, "We know the right way, and the only way is our way," a single focused highway to nowhere.

All of the debate that has come about over the last few weeks about the drug effort in this Nation was simply saying that we now have a better approach, and that approach, Mr. Speaker, is to support prevention programs and safe and drug-free schools.

In conclusion, let me simply say that I am glad we are at a point where we are, that this bill is passed, but it was a long journey, but it is better for America, and we are better for doing it, and America is good for us doing it for them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### TRIBUTE TO HON. ROBERT S. WALKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Fox] is recognized for 5 minutes.